

Legislator University

SSC 306:

An Overview of the Child Welfare System

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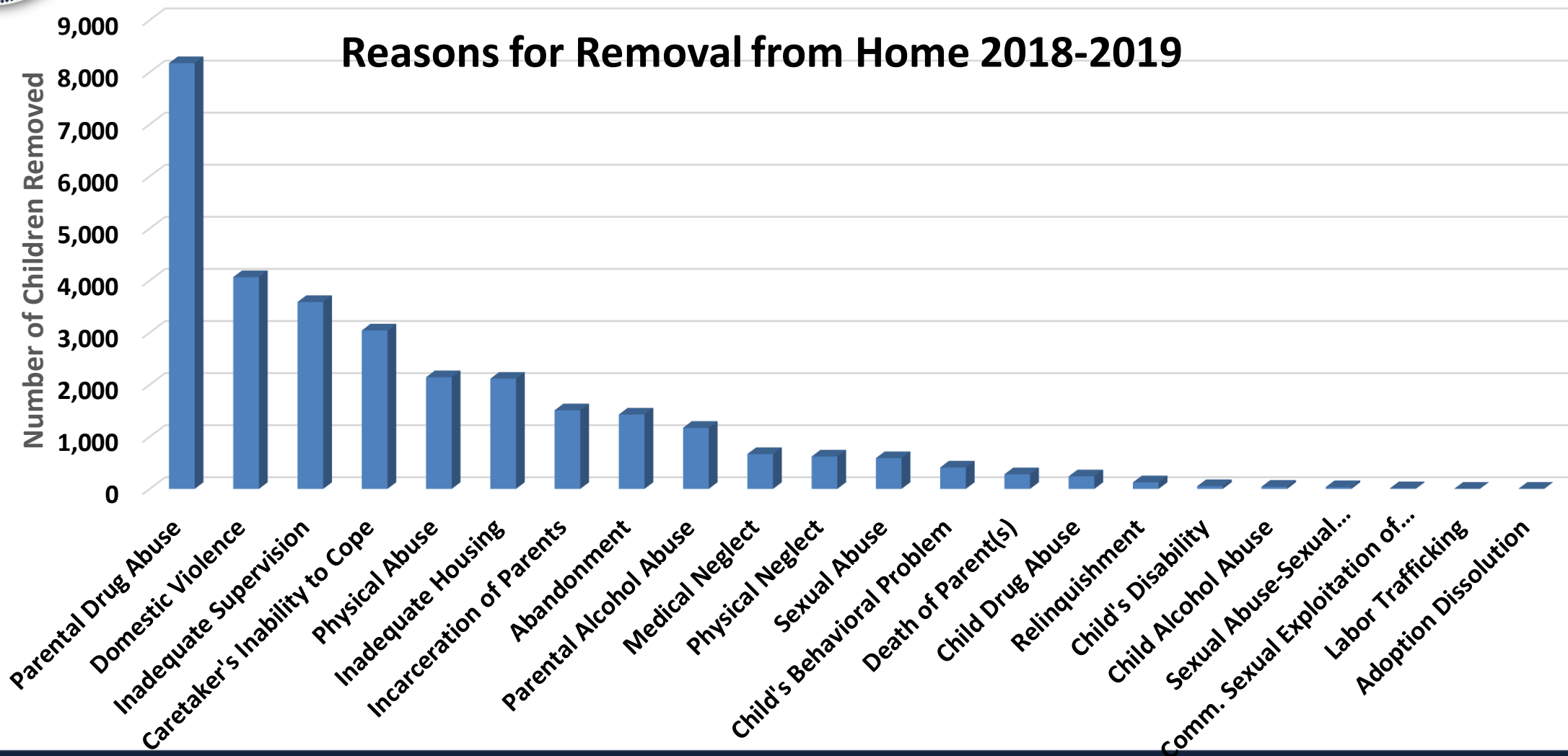


What is Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation?

- Acts that:
 - Are willful or threatened that result in harm
 - Deprive child of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment
 - Cause significant impairment
- Many statutory nuances!
 - E.g.--not neglect if family lacks financial means to care for child



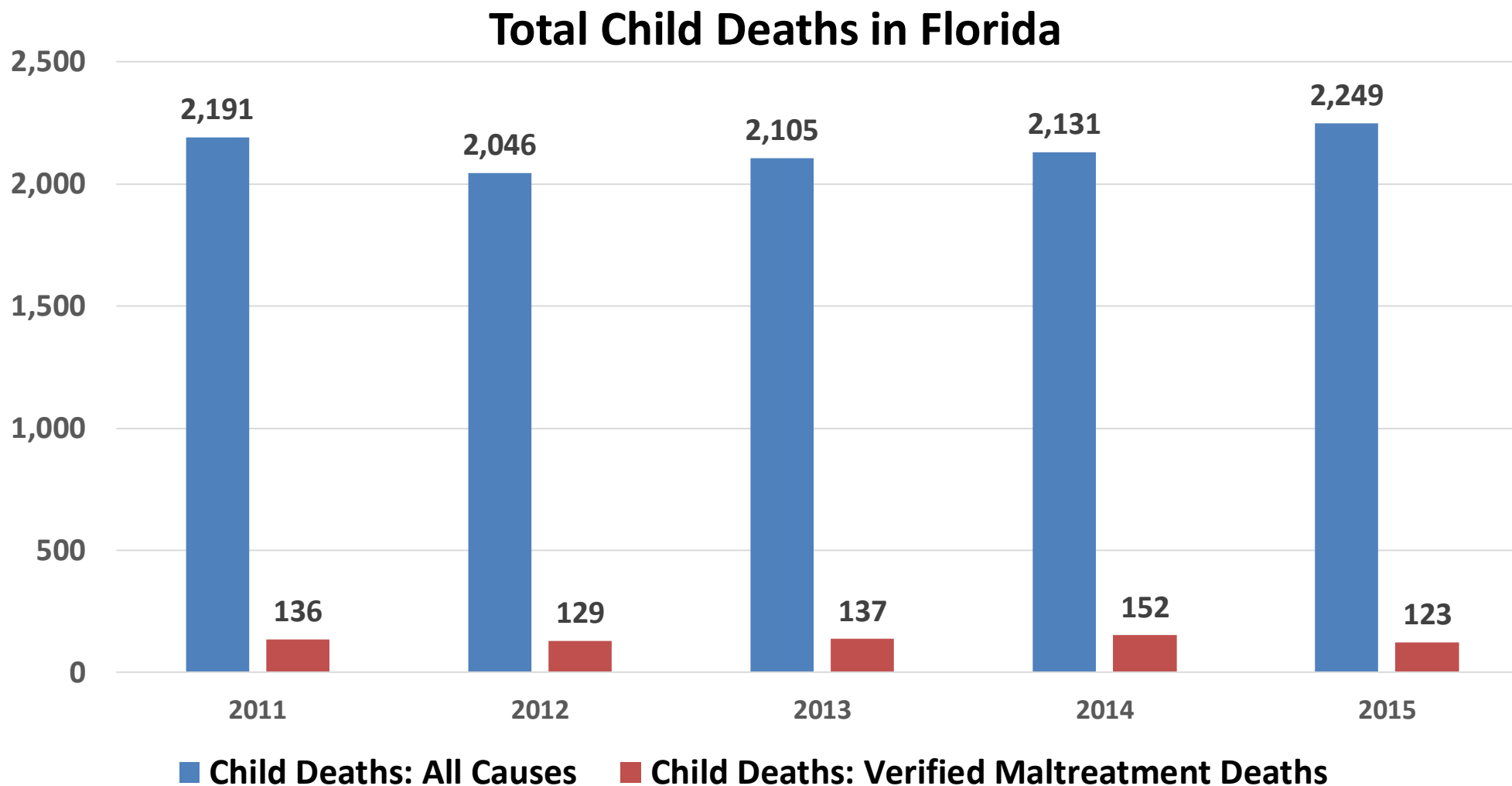
Child Welfare Problem: Many Forms of Maltreatment



Source: Executive Office of the Governor, Office of Adoption and Child Protection Annual Progress Report, 2019



Child Welfare Problem: Many Preventable Deaths from Child Abuse and Neglect

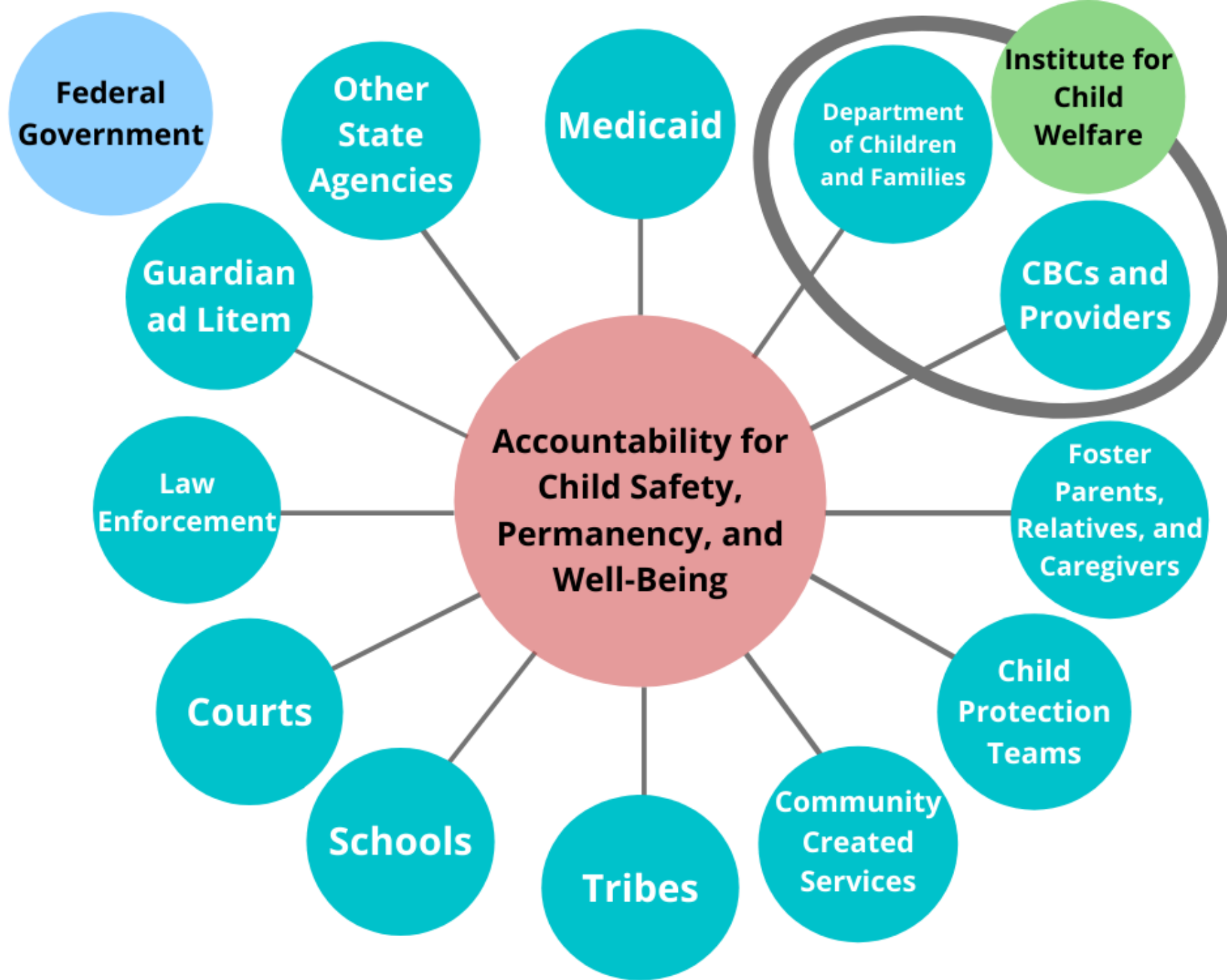




Florida's Child Welfare System Is Asked to Do Many Things

Ch. 39, F.S., lists 16 goals for the child welfare system, such as:

- provide for the care, safety, and protection of children
- preserve and strengthen the child's family ties whenever possible
- ensure that permanent placement with the biological or adoptive family is achieved as soon as possible





Child Welfare Problem: Complex Structure

Federal influence

- Significant funding—with lots of strings attached
- Major recent and ongoing changes in state policy and operations:
 - 2006: Title IV-E funding waiver which allowed significant flexibility and innovation
 - 2019: Waiver eliminated--transition back to restrictive funding/service rules
 - 2021: Preparing for future—Family First Prevention Services Act



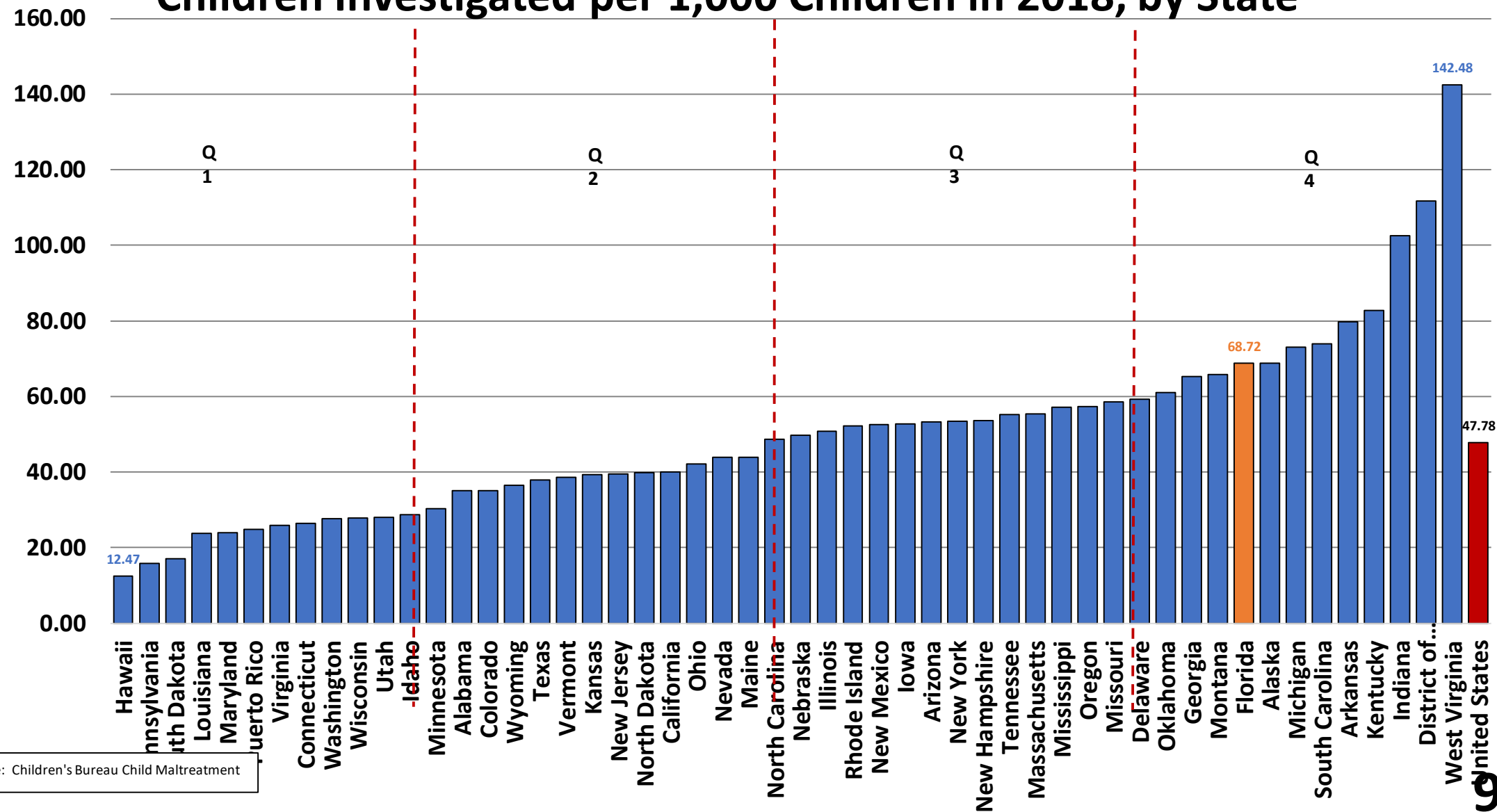
Child Welfare Problem: Complex Structure

DCF and its contractors

- DCF performs child welfare investigations – except where sheriffs perform them
- DCF also provides attorney services—except where the Attorney General or state attorneys do so
- Community-based care lead agencies (CBCs) and their subcontracted service providers offer in-home, foster care and adoption services

How Many Children and Families are Investigated?

Children Investigated per 1,000 Children in 2018, by State

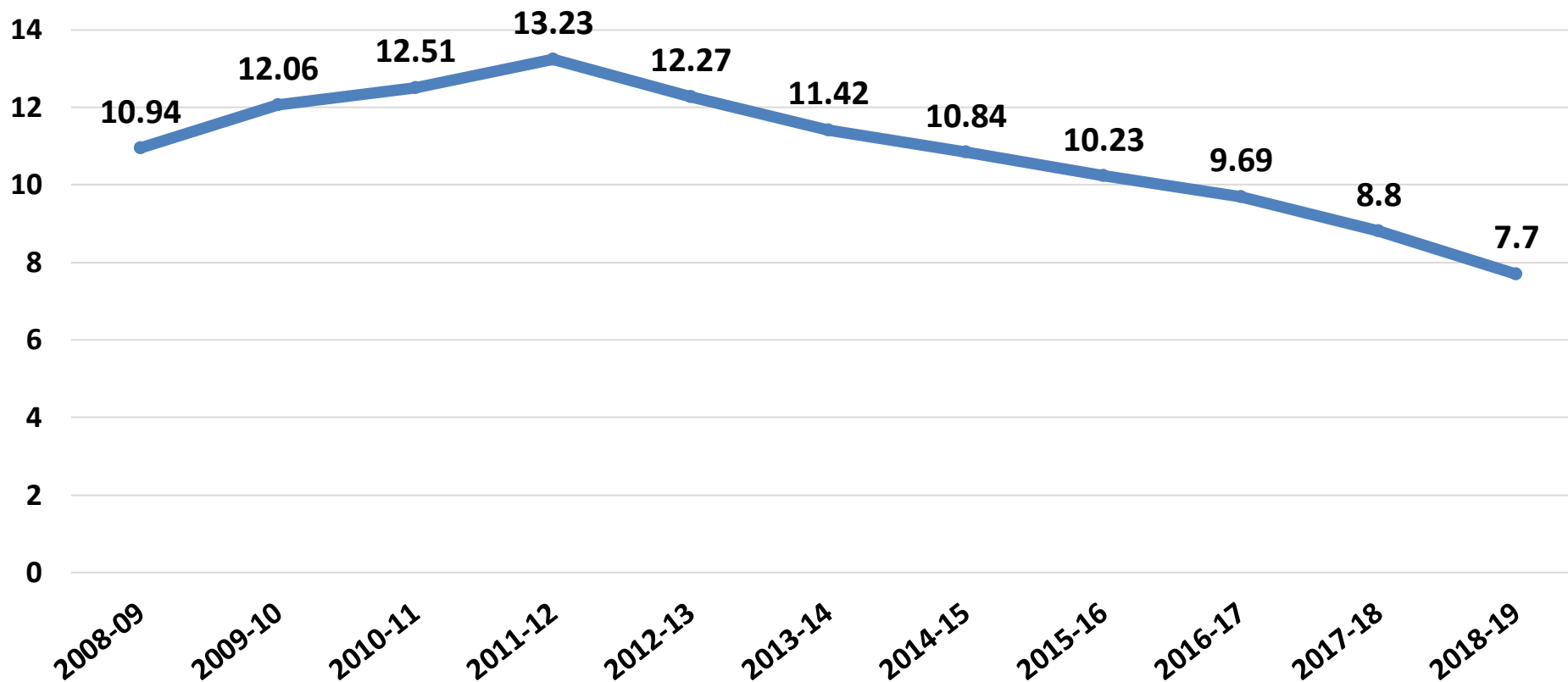


Data Source: Children's Bureau Child Maltreatment Data



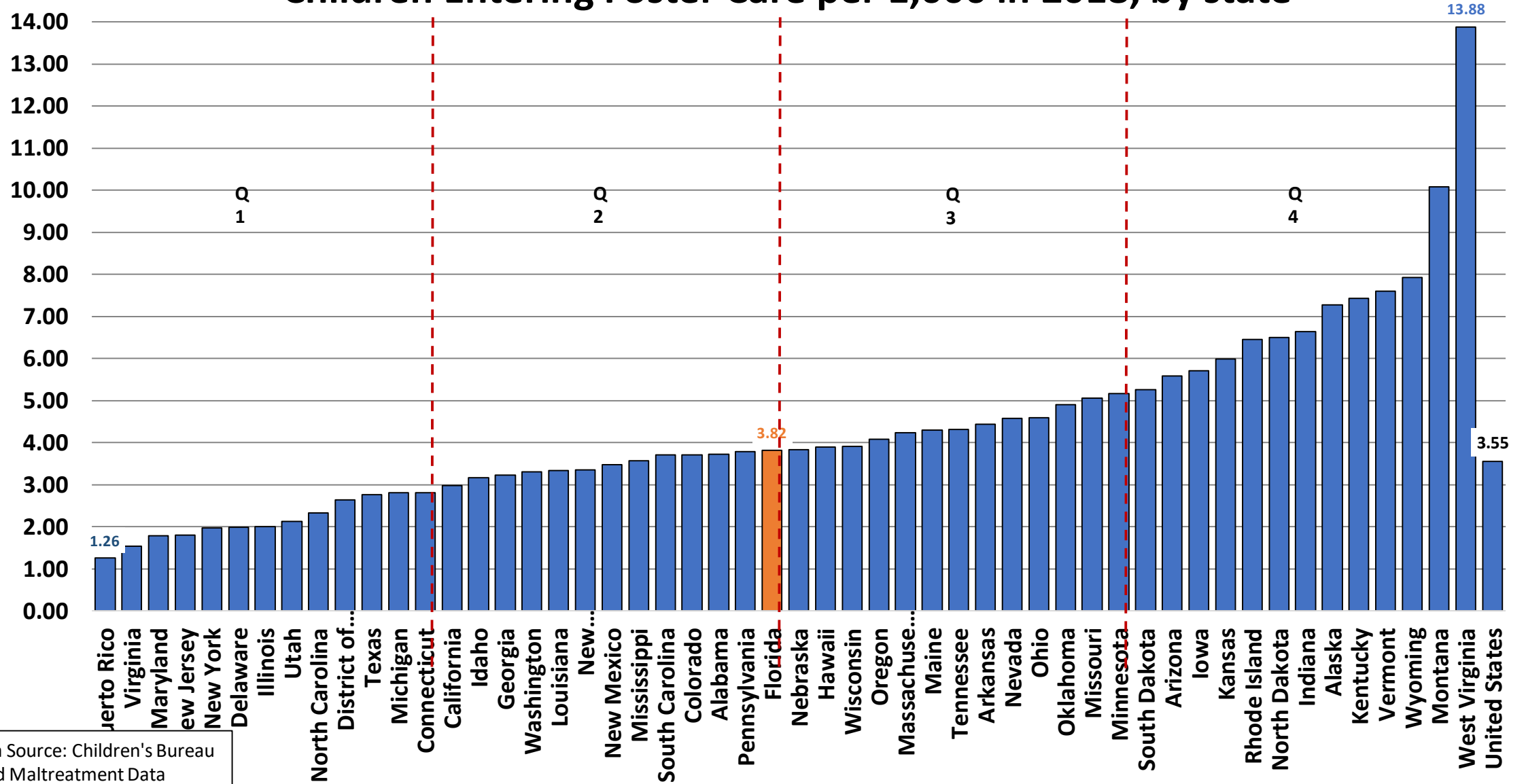
How Many Children are Maltreated?

Florida's Child Maltreatment Rate per 1,000 Children



How Many Children Enter Foster Care?

Children Entering Foster Care per 1,000 in 2018, by state

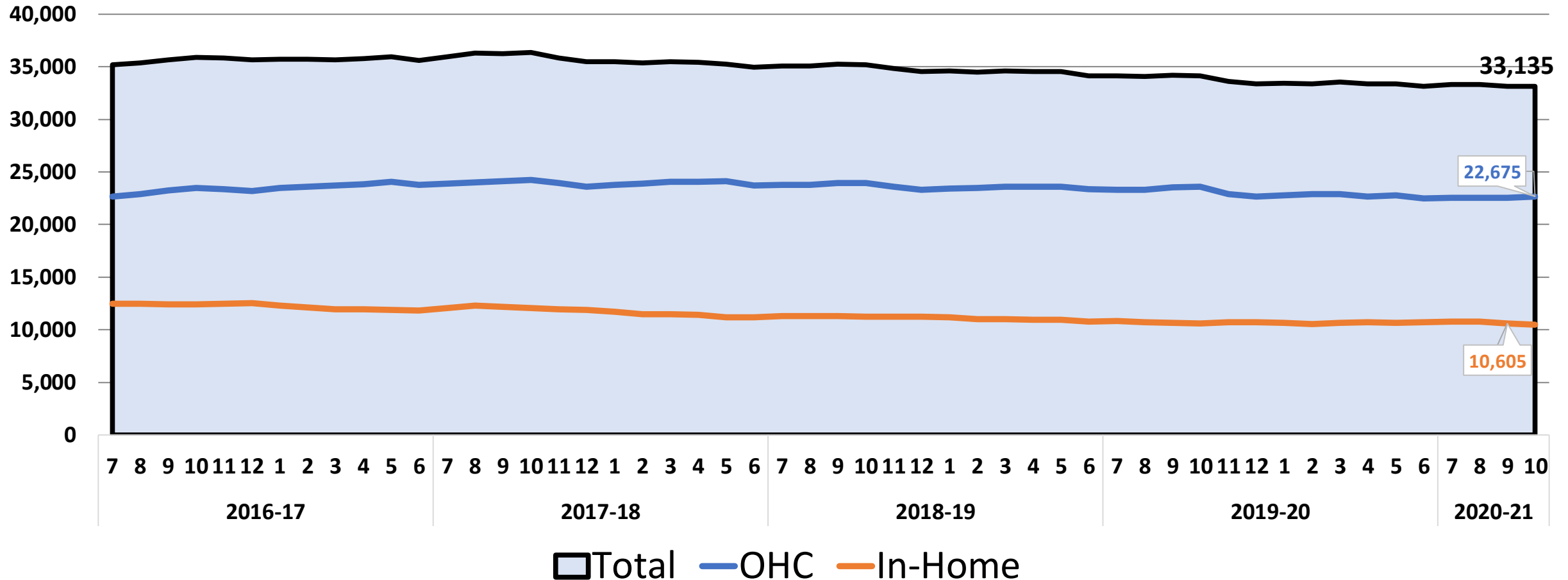


Data Source: Children's Bureau
Child Maltreatment Data



What are Children's Living Settings During DCF Involvement?

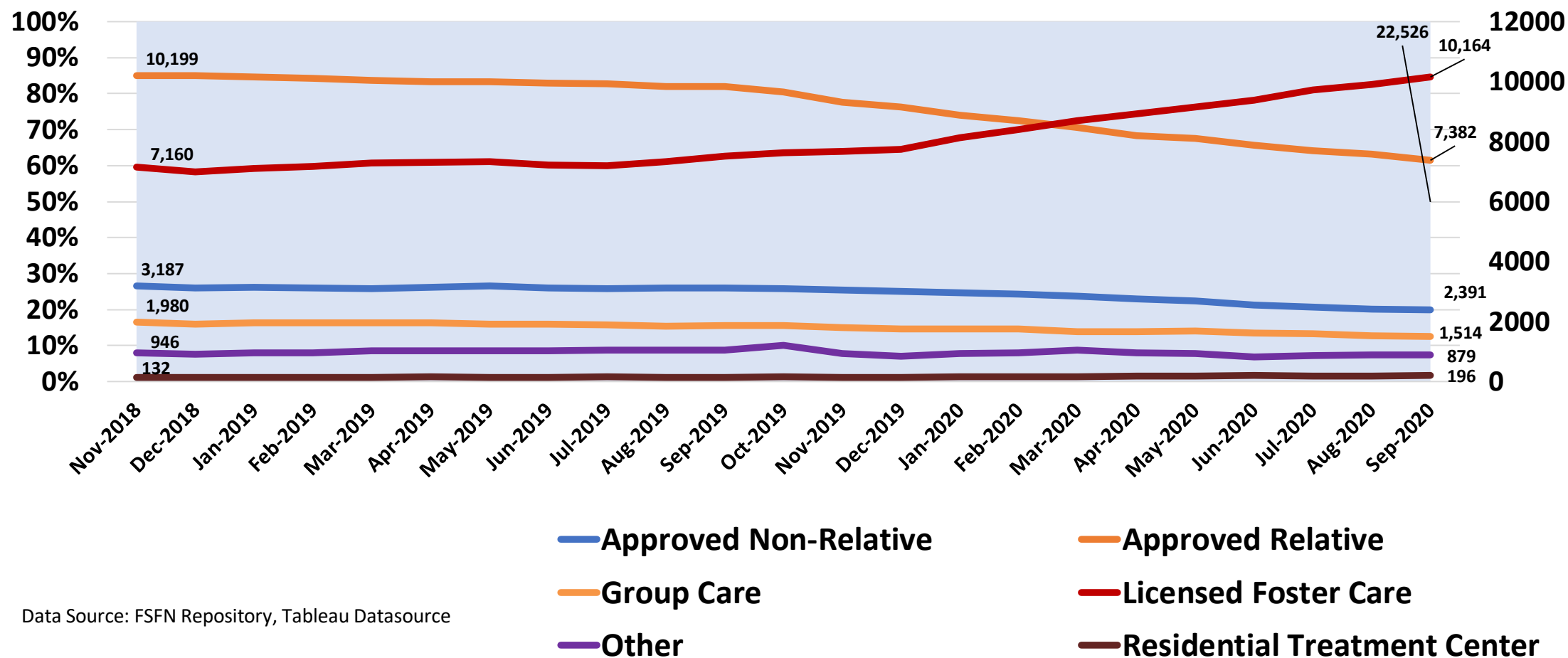
Children Served Out-of-Home Care and In-Home
as of the Last Day of the Month, Statewide





What are Children's Living Settings During DCF Involvement?

Children in Out-Of-Home Care by Placement Type





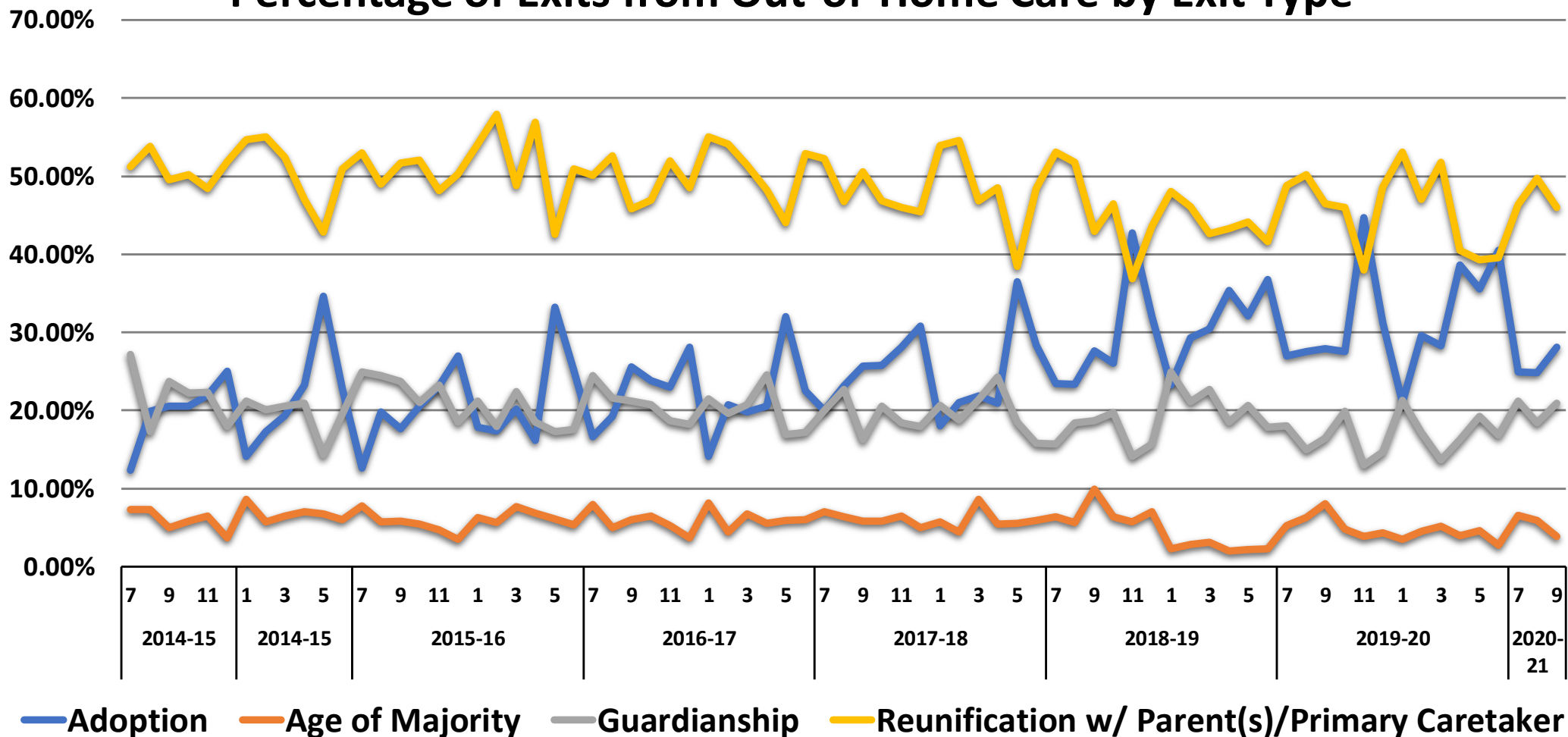
What Services Can Children and Families Receive?

- Family Support Services
- Parenting education
- Domestic violence intervention
- Specialized substance abuse treatment
- Mental health services
- Case management
- Material support



What are Outcomes for Children?

Percentage of Exits from Out-of-Home Care by Exit Type





What Tools Does the Legislature Have?

- Regulation
- Resources
- Outcomes measurement
- Transparency



Child Welfare Tools: Regulation

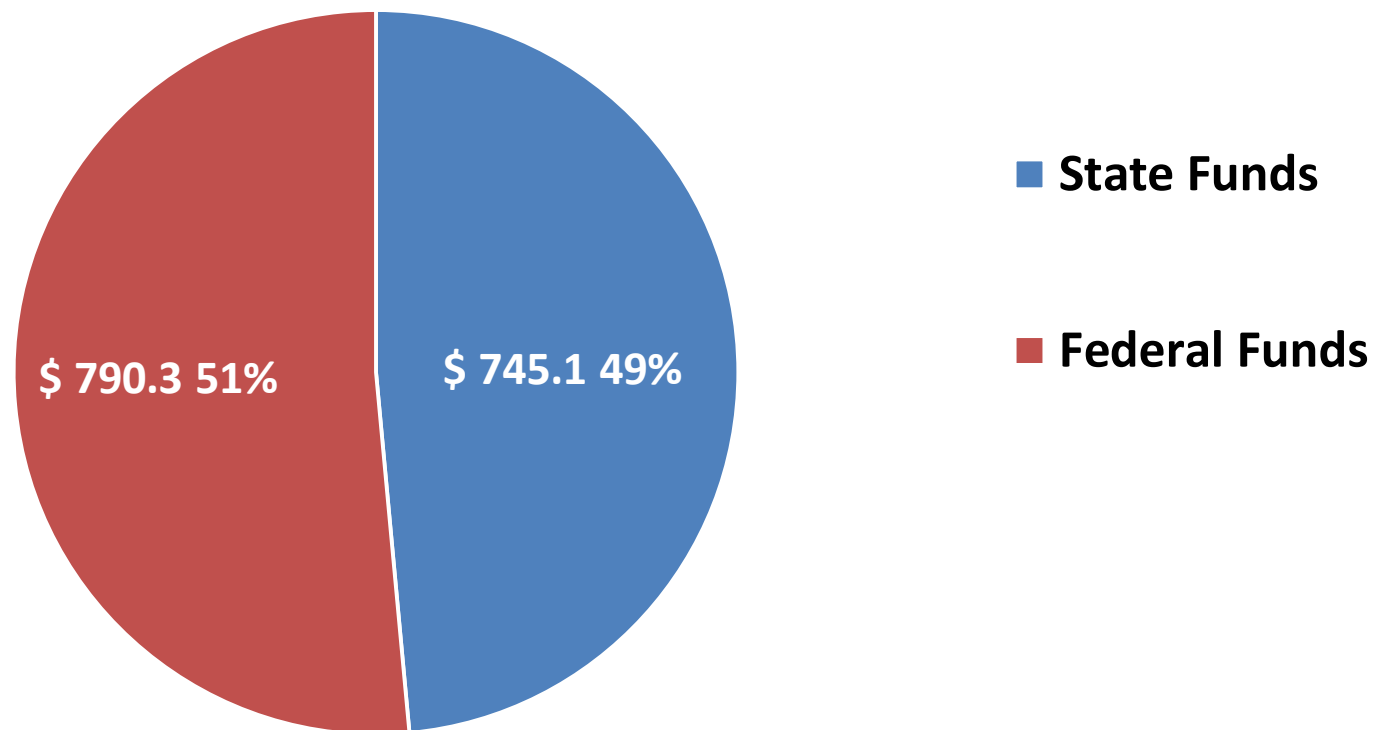
Recent legislation:

- Outlined criteria for judges to consider when changing a child's placement
- Specified timeframes for licensing foster parents
- Detailed how foster parents should work together with birth parents
- Strengthened DCF's ability to hold contractors accountable for performance



Child Welfare Tools: State and Federal Funding

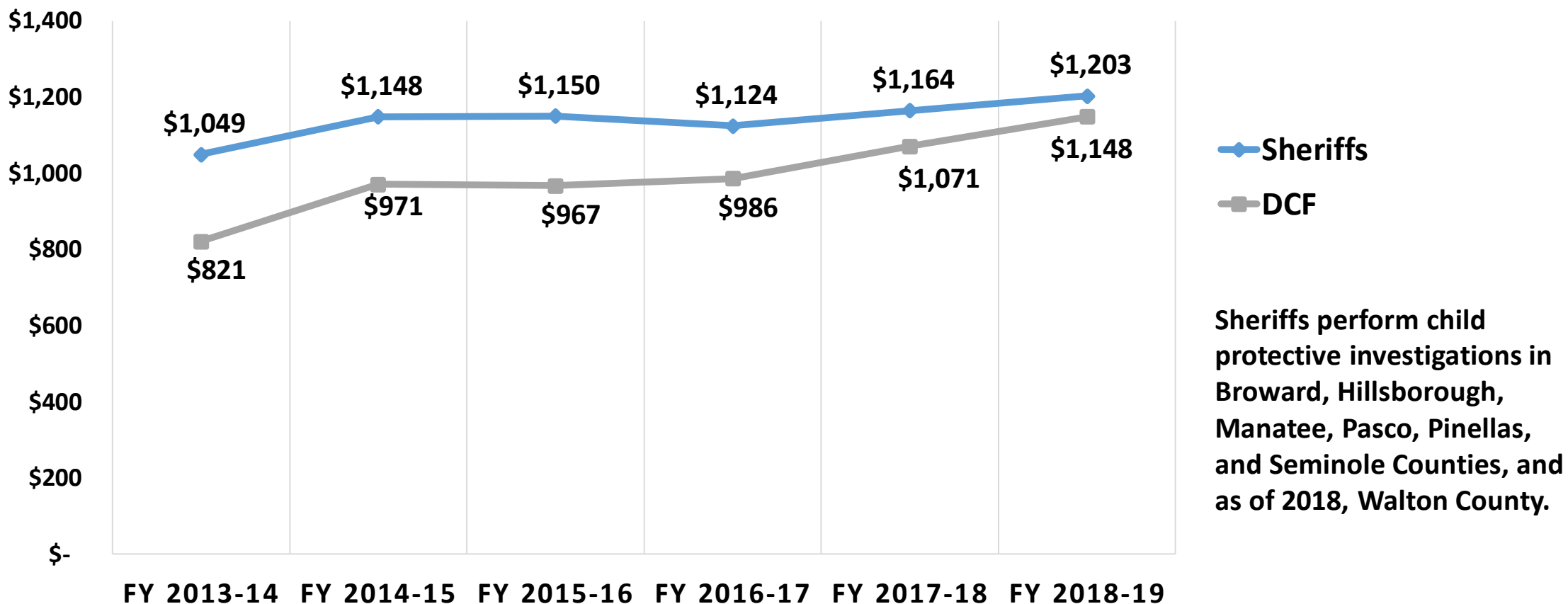
Proportion of State and Federal Funding for Child Welfare Programs
Dollars in Millions





Child Welfare Tools: Resources – Investigation Funding

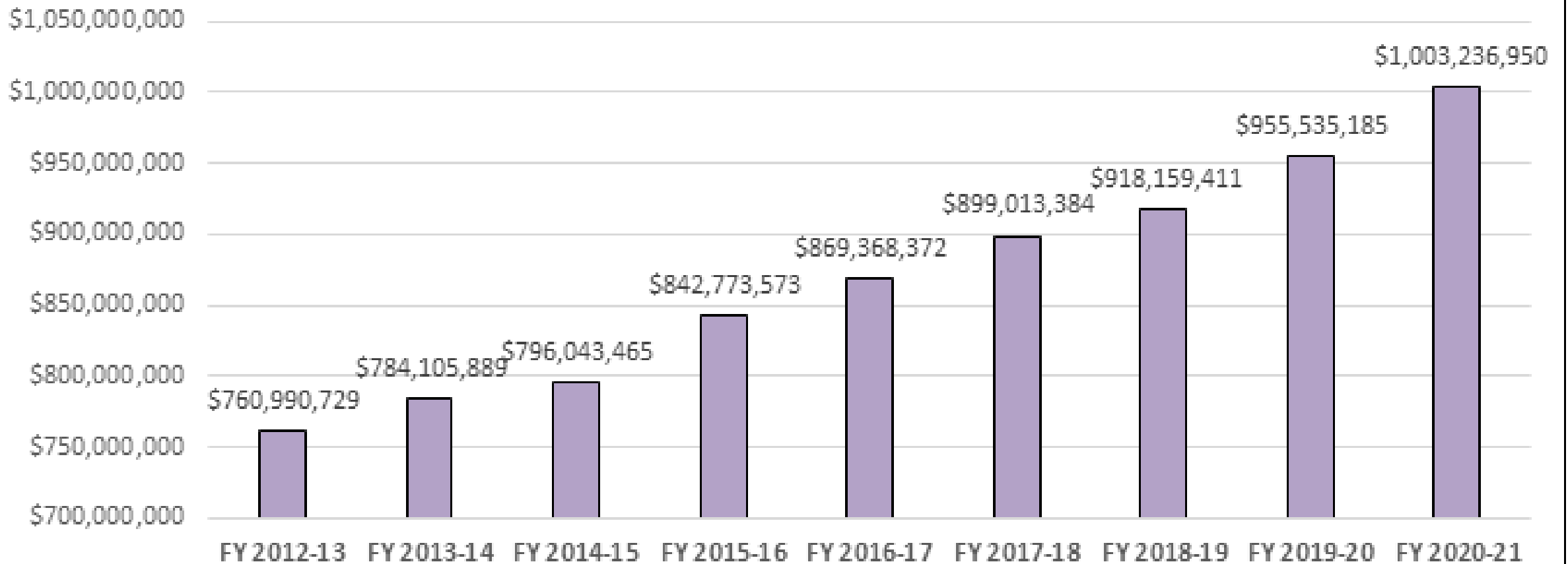
Child Protective Investigation Appropriations: Sheriffs and DCF





Child Welfare Tools: Resources – CBC Funding

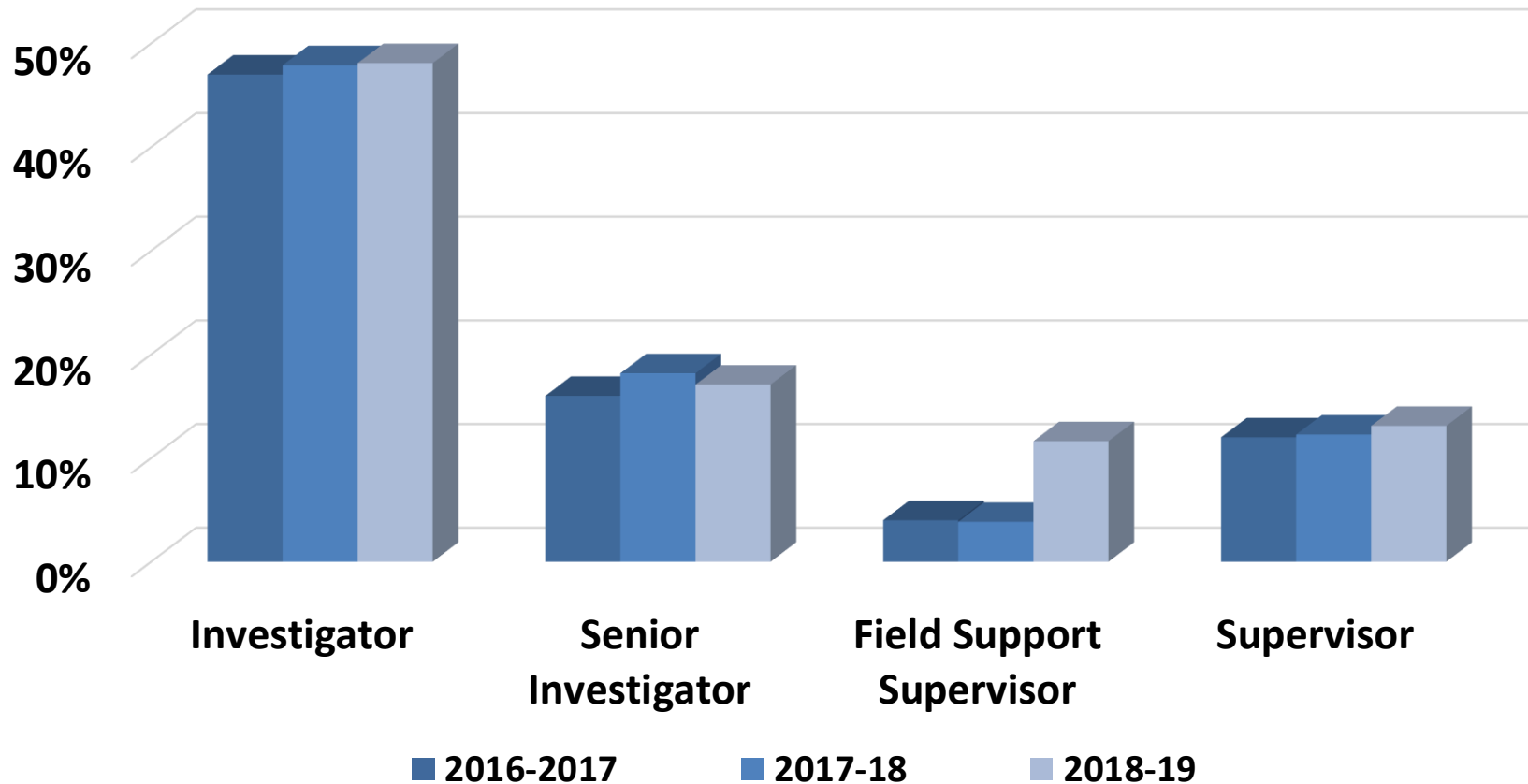
Community-Based Care Appropriations by Fiscal Year





Child Welfare Tools: Resources – Personnel

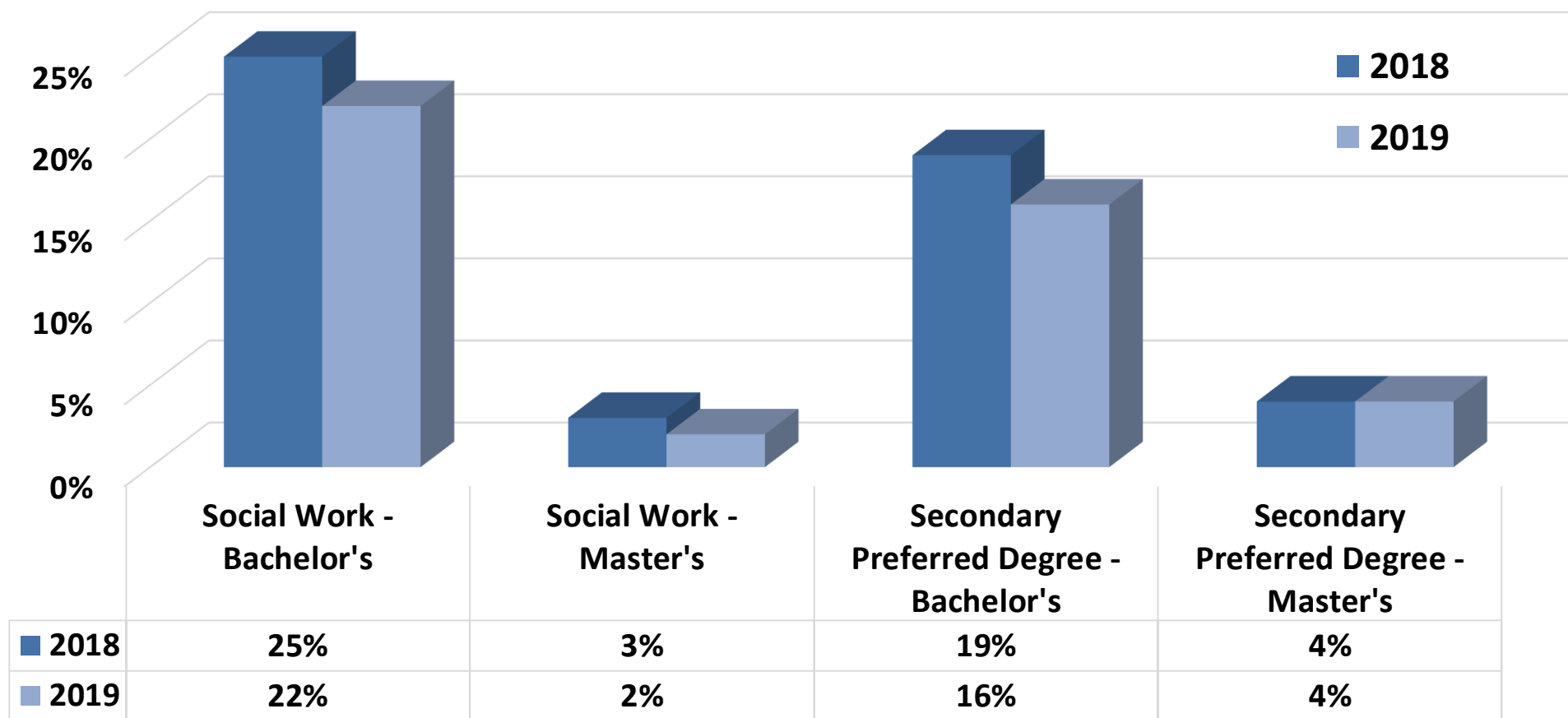
DCF Child Protective Investigative Staff Turnover By Position, FY 2016-17 through 2018-2019





Child Welfare Tools: Resources – Personnel

Social Work and Secondary Preferred Degree Attainment by DCF Child Protective Investigative Staff: 2018 and 2019



Source: *Child Protective Investigator and Child Protective Investigator Supervisor Educational Qualifications, Turnover, and Working Conditions Status Reports*, DCF, Oct. 1, 2018, and Oct. 1, 2019. Data as of August 2018 and June 2019. Secondary preferred degrees include those in psychology, sociology, counseling, special education, education, human development, child development, family development, marriage and family therapy, and nursing.



Child Welfare Tools: Resources – Knowledge Generation

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Affiliate Research

In the following publication, Institute Affiliate Dr. Marleen Milner discusses addressing teen pregnancy and early parenting among youth in foster care.

[READ BRIEFLIT](#)

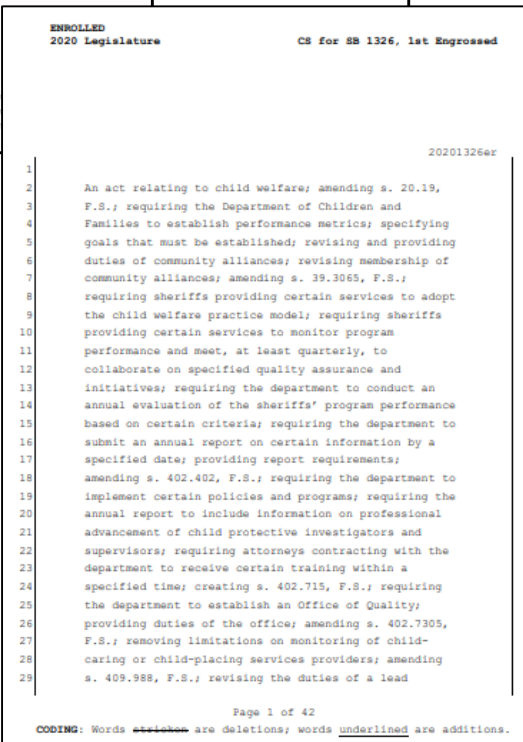
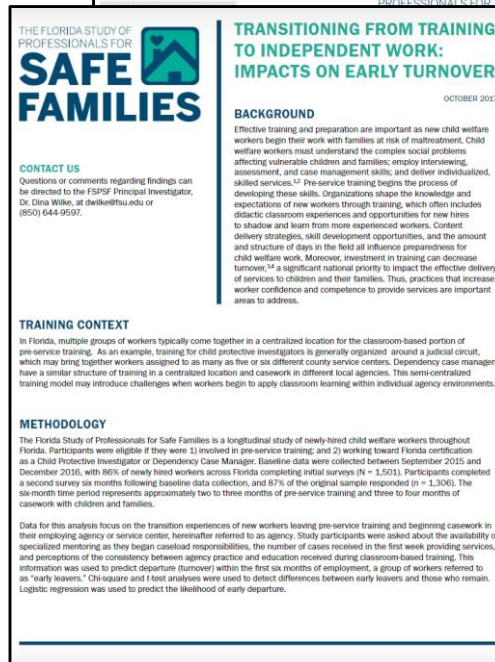
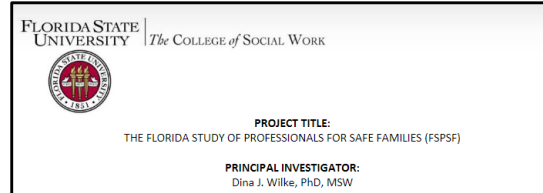


The Florida Institute for Child Welfare seeks to promote safety, permanency, and well-being among the children and families of Florida that are involved with the child welfare system.





Child Welfare Tools: Resources – Knowledge Generation



Florida lawmakers sign off on child welfare changes

Bill now goes to Gov. Ron DeSantis



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – With House sponsor Mel Ponder, R-Destin, saying he would like to see the Department of Children and Families viewed as a "gateway of hope," lawmakers gave final approval Wednesday to a bill that would make wide-ranging changes in the child-welfare system.

House members voted 117-0 to approve the bill (SB 1326), which also was unanimously approved this week by the Senate. It now will go to Gov. Ron DeSantis.

The bill, in part, seeks to bolster child-protective investigators, including taking steps to "mitigate and prevent the impact of secondary traumatic stress and burnout" among the front-line workers. Also, it calls for developing an expanded "career ladder" for child-protective investigation staff members. The bill, in part, also would establish an Office of Quality in the department to address issues such as performance standards and metrics.

The bill was sponsored in the Senate by incoming Senate President Wilton Simpson, R-Trilby, and had high-powered support from House Speaker Jose Oliva, R-Miami Lakes, and Florida First Lady Casey DeSantis.

Source: <https://www.news4jax.com/news/florida/2020/03/11/florida-lawmakers-sign-off-on-child-welfare-changes/>



Child Welfare Tools: Outcomes Measurement

Federal Measure	FY 2019 Q4	FY 2020 Q1	FY 2020 Q2	FY 2020 Q3	FY 2020 Q4	FY 2021 Q1	Target
M01: Rate of abuse per 100,000 days in foster care	8.46	8.21	7.31	6.98	6.7	6.3	8.5 Lower
M02: % of children with no recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months	92.90%	92.78%	92.97%	92.94%	93.05%	93.35%	90.9 Higher
M03: % of children exiting to a permanent home w/in 12 months of entering care	39.82%	38.66%	38.55%	38.00%	37.20%	36.90%	40.5 Higher
M04: % of children exiting to a permanent home w/in 12 months for those in care 12 to 23 months	54.38%	53.24%	54.13%	51.79%	50.63%	51.71%	43.6 Higher
M05: % of children exiting to a permanent home w/in 12 months for those in care 24+ months	46.89%	48.27%	49.35%	48.22%	48.44%	46.66%	30.3 Higher
M06: % of children who do not re-enter care w/in 12 months of moving to permanent home	89.99%	90.23%	90.45%	89.90%	89.98%	90.30%	91.7 Higher
M07: Placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care	4.68	4.75	4.55	4.23	3.76	3.53	4.12 Lower

Below Standard

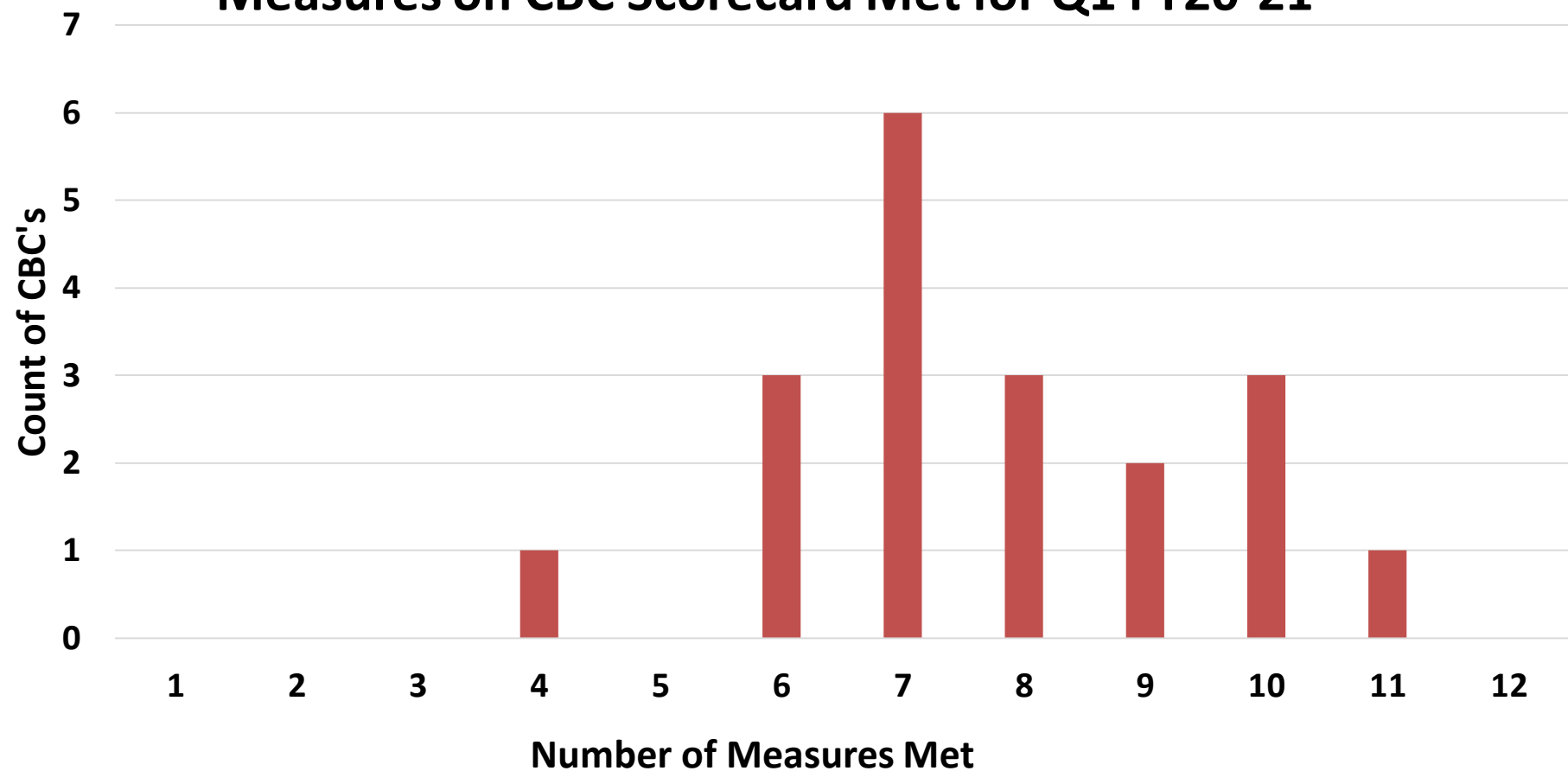
Above Standard

Last updated: 10/20/2020



Child Welfare Tools: Outcomes Measurement

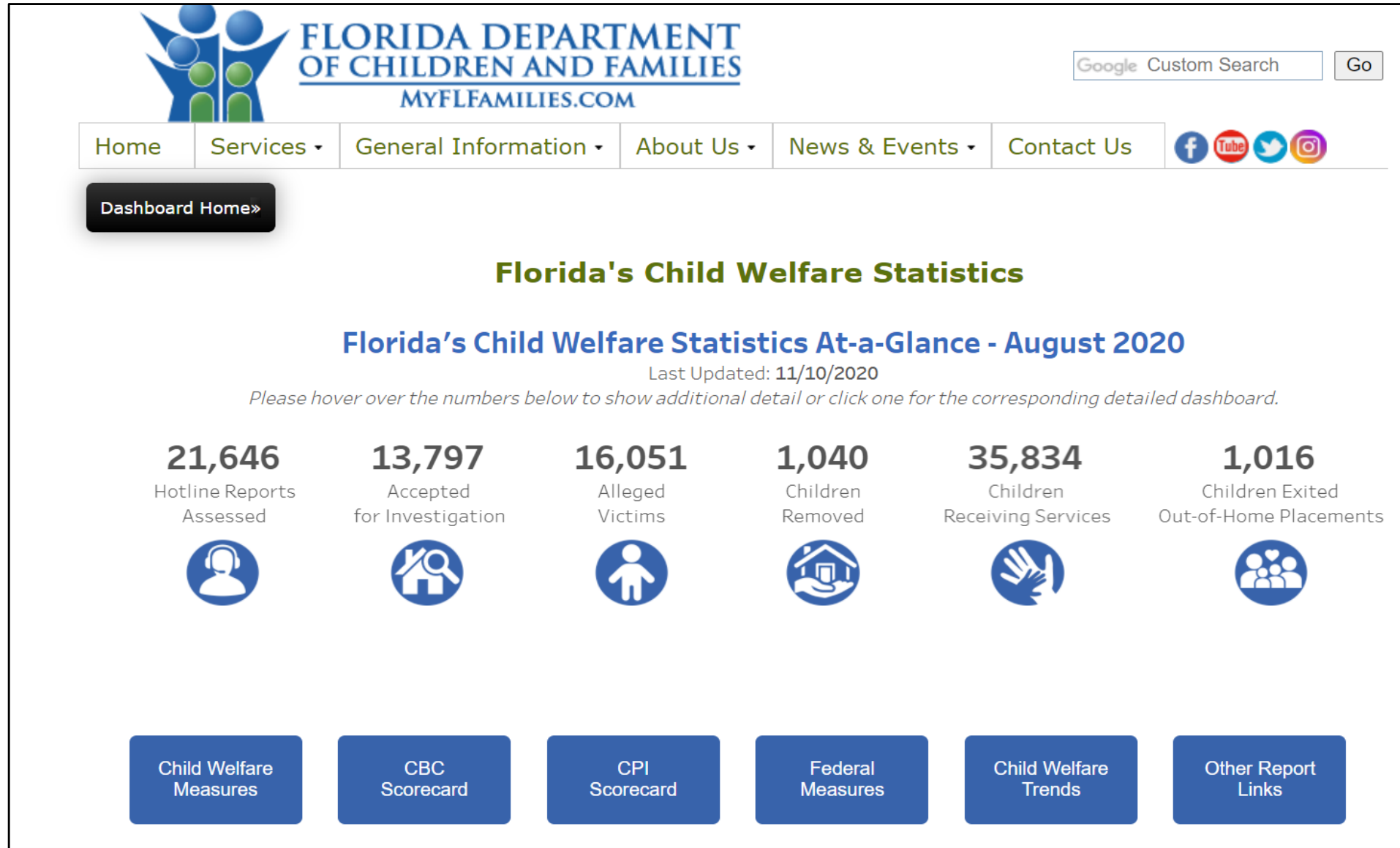
CBC Performance: Count of CBC's by Total Number of Measures on CBC Scorecard Met for Q1 FY20-21



Child Welfare Tools:

Transparency – Child Welfare Dashboard

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/programs/childwelfare/dashboard/>



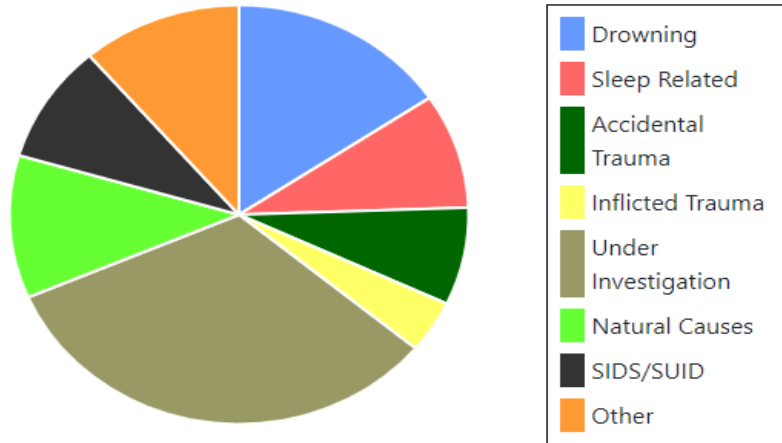
Child Welfare Tools:

Transparency – Child Fatality Website

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childfatality/>

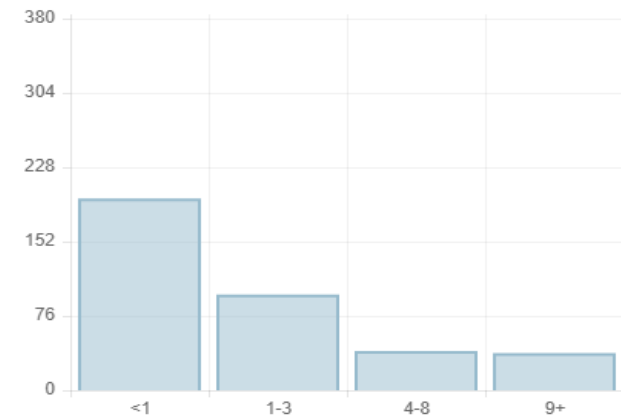
Total Child Fatalities 2020: 372

Fatalities By Causal Factor

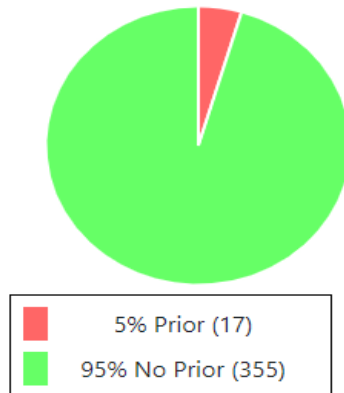


Age at Death

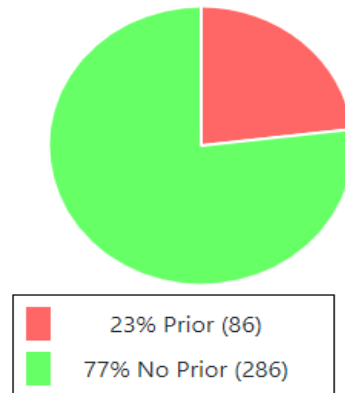
Children 3 and Under represent 79% of Fatalities



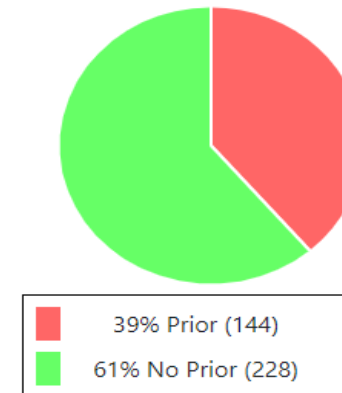
Verified Prior with Family in Past 12 Months



Prior Involvement with Deceased Child



Prior Involvement with Family in Past 5 Years





What are Current Issues?

- Implementation of new federal child welfare funding legislation
- COVID-related system impacts
- Implementation of accountability initiatives



New Federal Child Welfare Funding Legislation

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA):

- Provides funding match for limited types of prevention services
- Allows use of federal prevention funds to serve a broader array of children and families
- Limits federal funding for placements in congregate settings (group homes)



Current Issues:

New Federal Child Welfare Funding Legislation

Impacts to Florida:

- Revenue impact --placement funding vs. prevention funding
- Need for statutory changes to emphasize prevention activities and placement alternatives
- New initiatives and integration with behavioral health service systems



Current Issues:

COVID-Related System Impacts

- Fewer hotline calls have led to caseload declines; unclear what long-term impact will be
- Some front-line workers are concerned about exposure
- Increased use of teleconferencing offers benefits and challenges



Current Issues:

2020 Legislation on Accountability Initiatives

Required by SB 1326:

- DCF quality office
- Increased standards for contractors
- New reporting on outcomes
- Child welfare workforce initiatives to address turnover

Health and Human Services Committee

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Questions?